

Putting Prevention to Work in a Snohomish County Treatment Center

Chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and lung disease are the leading causes of death in Washington State. These diseases are often preventable. Being physically active, eating healthy foods, and not using tobacco reduces the likelihood of getting one of these diseases. Healthy environments give Washington residents the opportunity to make healthy choices.

In March 2010, Communities Putting Prevention to Work provided federal stimulus dollars to make changes that would encourage people to eat healthier, get more physical activity, and stop using tobacco. This is an example of how stimulus funds changed a community in Snohomish County.

SNOHOMISH

69 percent of adults in chemical dependency treatment centers smoke, compared with 15 percent of adults statewide.^{1, 2}

Quitting smoking is hard enough. It is often more difficult for people struggling with an additional drug or alcohol problem. Clients at the Recovery Center, part of Valley General Hospital in Snohomish County, face these issues. The Recovery Center provides residential treatment, outpatient services and day treatment for individuals and families facing chemical dependency. Until last year, clients who smoked had limited support to quit.

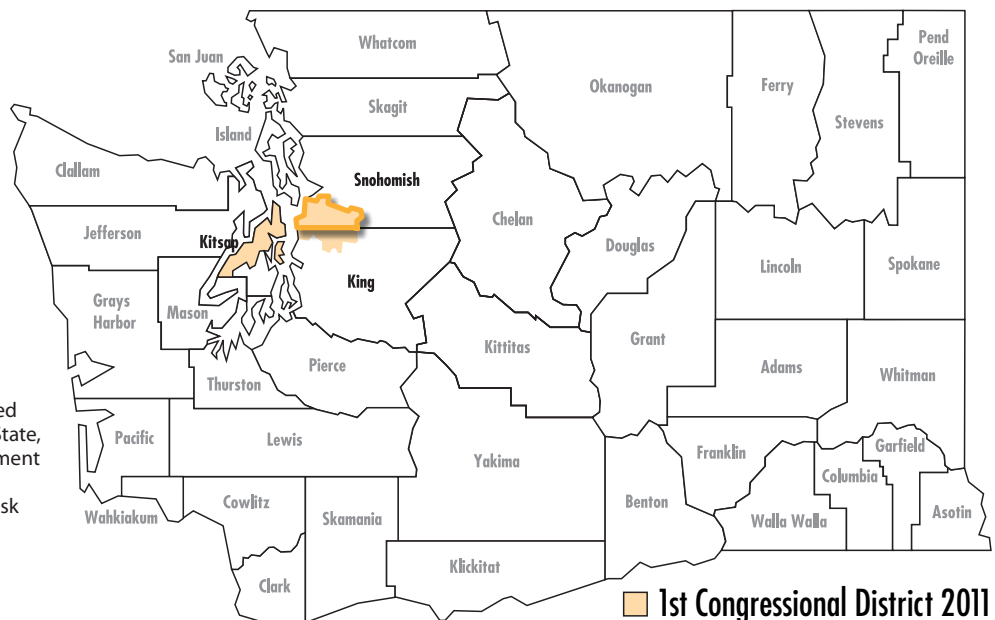
Supporting clients who want to quit

Staff from the Recovery Center and Valley General Hospital attended a statewide workshop on tobacco cessation strategies. They turned their new knowledge into visible change.

- Members from the Valley General Hospital and the Recovery Center formed an internal smoking cessation committee.
- The Recovery Center reduced the number of client “smoke breaks” and started providing alternative break activities such as music.
- Staff began talking with clients who smoked about how to quit and included cessation strategies in client treatment plans.

Impact

In 2011, the Valley General Hospital became a tobacco-free campus. The Recovery Center, located across the street, hopes to do the same in the future. In the meantime, visitors are no longer allowed to smoke onsite. Also, patients are now asking for help to quit smoking – something that’s never happened before.



Data sources:

¹ Data for adult patients admitted to publicly funded chemical dependency treatment in Washington State, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery Treatment Analyzer (DBHR-TA), 2011

² Data for adults in Washington State, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2010